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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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'CONFERENCE FOR PALESTINE'

CAPITALISM AND LIBERATION ARE INCOMPATIBLE

Detroit MI, May 24—The People's Conference for Palestine presented a tremendous opportunity for members and friends of Progressive Labor Party to engage in sharp political action and discussion centered around U.S. imperialism, the bosses' use of nationalism to divide and weaken the working class, the misleadership of the conference organizers, the tremendous potential for a new society embodied by solidarity encampments, and the need for communist revolution to sweep away the old society.

People's Conference: ruling class ideas on display

The message of the conference was clear: "Freedom" for Palestinians means a Palestinian ruling class replacing Zionist occupiers. There was constant glorification of South Africa, Algeria and other post-colonial countries, with zero recognition that inequality and racism still stalk the working class of these countries. In discussions our group was clear that simply replacing one set of bosses for another isn't the answer. As a comrade put it, "capitalism and liberation are incompatible."

The bankrupt politics and hypocrisy at work in the conference were made crystal clear when we were attacked for distributing CHALLENGE and our conference leaflet. The organizers went so far as to threaten to call the cops if we continued distributing. This development made it clear that organizers demanded adherence to the conference's politics of pro-Hamas nationalism. The emptiness of their slogans of working-class solidarity were put on full display.

Finally, the last day of the conference coincided with the barbaric incineration of 45 Gazan refugees by the fascist Israeli army. The rhetoric was full of outrage, but there was no action. Our small group attempted to get attendees to visit the nearby encampment at Wayne State University, not more than 10 minutes away by car, for a rally, but the conference organizers did nothing.

More than 3,000 youth, students, and workers united with a desire to smash U.S.-backed Israeli genocide. Truly globalizing the intifada means we must shake off nationalist, reformist misleaders and fight for the only solution, communist revolution!

Gotta be in it to win it

The trip was only possible because we've immersed ourselves in the class struggle on our campuses. On our local campuses, we've formed and given political leadership to our Common Ground anti-racist clubs which has exposed dozens and dozens of students to our political ideas. These clubs have been the vehicle

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SCAN ME

OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail: Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet: Online: www.plp.org
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: @Challenge Desafio
Instagram: @ PLPchallenge

@PLPCHALLENGE

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Gaza and Sudan: Flashpoints for World War

Within a span of two weeks, Israel used made-in-USA bombs to strike the Tal as-Sultan refugee camp near Rafah, bombing and burning to death at least 45 displaced workers in yet another genocidal atrocity in Gaza; 134 people died in a single hospital in the Darfur region of Sudan. They were casualties of a yearlong, imperialist-fueled civil war and another looming genocide. From the Israeli Defense Forces' state terror to the brutal battle between rival generals in Sudan, the future of our class without communism is bleak.

With U.S. imperialism in steep decline, Hamas nationalists and dueling gangsters in Sudan are seeking to partner with capitalist rulers in Iran, China, and Russia. The resurgence of the civil war in Sudan and the ongoing bloodbath in Gaza are drawing the U.S. into more direct confrontation with their imperialist competition, all on the backs of Black and Brown workers. These conflicts reflect the world situation in this period, a time of dangerous instability, rising fascism, and inevitable world war. The world's working class has only two options: to lie down and die for this deadly system, or to organize and fight for an internationalist, worker-led red army–for communist revolution.

Middle East: U.S bosses losing control

According to a 2019 United Nations report, the Levant Basin in the eastern Mediterranean Sea contains 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil, with an estimated total value of $524 billion (UN Conference on Trade and Development, 2019). Much of these resources lie beneath or off the coast of the Gaza Strip. Long before Israel's most recent siege of racist slaughter and ethnic cleansing, the Zionist regime's occupation and blockade of Gaza "prevented the Palestinian people from exercising any control over their own fossil fuel resources, denying them much-needed fiscal and export revenues and leaving the Palestinian economy on the verge of collapse" (Al Jazeera, 6/21/21).

Given the economic stakes and the reality on the ground, where Gaza is physically devastated and Jewish settlers in the West Bank are killing and pillaging Muslim and Brown workers with impunity, a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine seems impossible. Israel's capitalist rulers will attempt to hold on to these territories by any means necessary–including mass extermination and forced migration, the final solutions to Israel's Palestine "problem."

Meanwhile, the U.S. and regional power Saudi Arabia are nearing an agreement to develop Saudi Arabia's nuclear program, a point of leverage against imperialist rivals of the U.S.: "Supporters of the arrangement maintain that it will enhance regional security by bolstering the U.S.-led alliance in the Middle East against Iran, checking the rising influence of China in the Arab world, and facilitating the normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia" (Foreign Policy, 5/29). The nationalist misleaders who run Hamas, along with Hezbollah and the Houthis, are all funded by Iran. Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel stalled the pending nuclear deal. But even if it's revived, the U.S. will be relying on de facto Saudi ruler Mohammed bin Salman, a loose cannon who jails prime ministers and murders journalists. Between Salman and the reckless and defiant war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, the U.S. bosses are straining to keep their junior partners in check.

For the world's working class, the only solution is to smash the capitalist ruling class with a militant, internationalist revolution led by workers, students, and soldiers. Students and workers who expose capitalist universities for their complicity in genocide are leading the way. And as workers in Rafah and Sudan ration food to share and help each other survive, they show how we must practice communist principles even under the most dire conditions. Workers of the world unite to turn the bosses' imperialist wars into class wars to smash the bosses.

Sudan–flash point for wider war

U.S. weakness is emboldening Iran to strike back. As Saudi, Israeli, and U.S. bosses align, so are Sudanese and Iranian bosses. Although Sudan's army officially cut joint military ties in 2016, workers there recently spotted Iranian drones. With Sudan strategically positioned on the Red Sea, it fits into Iran's plan for geopolitical control over the Middle East. "From the other side of the Red Sea, Yemen's Houthis, armed in part by Iran, have launched attacks in support of Hamas in Gaza" (Reuters, 4/10).

Iran isn't the only power planting a stake in Africa. Just as imperialist competition for land, markets, and labor in Africa was central to the world wars of the 1900s, Sudan's current civil war reflects today's inter-imperialist rivalry. Chinese bosses are funneling billions in loans for infrastructure development that will draw the continent more tightly into their global capitalist network. Currently pending is an agreement between Ugandan officials and the Chinese firm Sinohydro to develop a $180 million power transmission line from Uganda to energy-starved South Sudan (Reuters, 4/14). Although Russia, a major oil exporter, has no need for Sudanese oil, they are a longstanding security partner and are keen to set up a naval base in Port Sudan on the Red Sea (AP News, 2/11/2023). While Russia and China claim to be joined at the hip in opposition to the U.S. and NATO in Ukraine, their interests–and those of the Iranian capitalists–may clash in Sudan. China's calls for "peacekeeping: and "stability" are muffled by the drumbeats of war.

Build the communist "red line of history"

Workers around the world–from Paris to Israel, from New York to Lebanon–have risen up in protest against the mass murder in Rafah, demanding an end to Israel's slaughter and occupation. Smaller protests have surfaced in cities like Philadelphia, linking the Sudan genocide to the struggles of workers in Gaza. But calls for "divestment" by universities or support for the "resistance" and ceasefires reveal the basic limits of reforms under capitalism. Genocide Joe Biden's lying proclamations aside, there is no "red line" for the bosses' profit-driven greed. With revolutionary communist leadership, workers must demand the overthrow of the capitalist system, drawing a "red line of history" that our class can celebrate and develop for generations to come.

With internationalist communism as our guide, we must be inspired by the courage of the workers in Gaza to seize every opportunity to build international workers' power, freed from the nationalism that divides us. From Israel and Palestine to Sudan and beyond, we can smash the imperialists and the nationalists and their murderous plans! إلى أعلى، إلى أعلى، مع العمال Up! Up! Up with the workers! Join the Progressive Labor Party!

May 1 March

To smash genocide, build and organize with PLP

Amidst the ongoing genocide and starvation of Palestinians in Gaza, 80 members and staff from the immigrant community organization in which Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members participate turned out for the pro-Palestinian May Day rally on May 1 in New York City. PLP members and friends rallied with the organization with hugs and chanting together. The Party played a key role in the process of getting the turnout and spirit of the group. We distributed 500 PLP leaflets (titled, "From all the rivers to all the seas, communism will set us free") inviting people to the PLP May Day march on May 4 in Brooklyn. A group of young staff came on May 4. Two are regularly reading CHALLENGE and want to get to know us better.

Organizing against genocide

PLP members have been working in this organization and surrounding community for more than 20 years. One comrade was an ESL teacher there for 10 years. We have recruited a number of workers to PLP and maintain a regular study group in the community. Since Oct 7 when Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis and the Zionists began the slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, comrades there have been in action. On Oct 10 we distributed 2,000 leaflets in the organization and the community. The title of the leaflet was: Israel-Hamas war means, Workers of the World Unite - Fight Back, Join the International Progressive Labor Party!

We spoke at the Workers' Committee of the organization about the war, genocide, oil, imperialist rivalry and the history of Israel and Palestine. Despite the lack of response then, the resistance against the directors of the Workers Committee invited comrades to organize a forum in December at the time and place of their meeting. 50 workers attended the forum presented in Spanish and English. A supervisor made an attempt to take over the forum, but she failed. The Party's ideas and speeches were applauded. Workers endorsed a rally in the community. CHALLENGE was widely distributed in the process.

A group of the organization's staff, members of a United Auto Workers (UAW) local, were motivated by our comrades' work to start a mass campaign to present five demands to the organizations' directors/bosses. The demands included an immediate and long-term ceasefire in Gaza, support for the divest movement and the no vote movement and political education for staff and members. Staff got 40 signatures and comrades got 20 worker/member signatures demanding a meeting with the bosses. The meeting turned out to be a call during which staff and comrades spoke well and sharply. Somewhat taken aback, the directors agreed to a statement on social media and political education. In response to the divest, no vote movements, one of the directors said, "We're not doing anything wrong, and we can invest in Israel as we see fit and we (that is the loyal liberals) have to re-elect Biden." A real "education" for members and staff of the organization.

Bosses' ideas poison for fightback

While there were some useful points in the political education webinar, nationalism and a total lack of class analysis was on display. There was no mention of the rivalry of the world's imperialists for control of oil, shipping routes, commerce, and control of the working class. We must destroy capitalism and imperialism everywhere and forever. Communism is the only solution! That is the Party's job, and we mustn't shy away from the struggle!

The result of the long-term organizing and protesting was the directors' decision to mobilize for the May Day rally on May 1st. Three workers and five young staffers joined other comrades and friends at PLP's May Day march on May 4. One worker joined and 2 others have gotten closer. Building a mass party is always our goal and we have a long way to go! In conclusion, this is an example of building the Party in this period of sharpening war, racism, and fascism. Let's do it!

Kentucky: Fight fascist attacks on workers

Workers rallied in madison county to demand an end to fascist attacks that criminalize homeless workers. Workers must reject Trump and Biden and join PLP to build a real communist movement where we can create the safer world for all workers.

MADISON COUNTY, KY, April 22 - Today members of the Progressive Labor Party joined the Madison County Tenants Union to rally for the repeal of HB5, Kentucky's new "Safer Kentucky" Act that makes us all unsafe! The law criminalizes homeless workers by making it illegal to camp on public property. It will increase incarceration and prison labor which only benefits the bosses. It also authorizes violent attacks by business and property owners on people camping on their property, and gives the green light to vigilantes to use "deadly physical force" against anyone who they think is trying to "dispossess" them of their property. These are all classic ways for the bosses to build a fascist movement.

We marched to the office of the Republican state senators behind this law, chanting and singing our union songs. Their response? They locked the door on us! We continued with speeches and testimonials outside, and shoved our scroll of over a thousand signatures in between the locked doors. This rally shook up the political bosses and was featured on the bosses' news media. We were able to spend some time strengthening our ties with other tenant union members. We shared a CHALLENGE newspaper with them, leading to discussions about the need to overthrow this entire fascist capitalist system!

Going beyond tenant organizing

And to overthrow capitalism we have to go beyond fighting the local racists in Kentucky. We have to organize against Genocide Joe Biden who is continuing Trump's racist attacks on migrants, escalating his predecessor Obama's racist attacks on migrants. We have to become part of a worldwide movement against imperialism and the looming world war. The bosses want to blame migrants for problems created by capitalism. And they also want workers to kill each other in wars that can only benefit these profiteering capitalists. Let's join the worldwide fight for a world run by the world's workers. That's communism. Join the Progressive Labor Party

Push back vs. bosses' mandated curriculum

Teachers are able to learn who their students are and plan lessons based on those needs. This planning is a creative endeavor, so, though it ultimately maintains capitalism, many teachers do get a sense of fulfillment as they use their labor to create. This illustrates what Karl Marx outlined in his book Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts: that there is a human connection between our labor and the products we create. Now teachers are facing the disconnection from the means of production, that is producing our own texts, questions and lessons. Instead of the creative joy that comes from knowing and learning from our students in order to create their learning experiences, we are being given a front row seat into the alienation the working class deals with every day. The NYC Department of Education (DOE) has unveiled a plan to force all NYC teachers to use curriculum that the DOE directly produces, beginning in math and english.

Teaching students loyalty to bosses

Communists know that the purpose for education under capitalism is to prepare the working class for the needs of the ruling class bosses. The bosses need compliant workers to be willingly exploited, as they steal our labor. So, though teachers are being removed from the production process of teaching, it will be the students who will directly face this ruling class attack. They will have prefabricated lessons designed by corporations and teachers who are compliant to the racist, sexist ideologies the bosses want to teach. Whereas, communist teachers have used the classroom to interrupt the bosses' ideological production, interjecting communist ideas, and building the Progressive Labor Party that will one day bury capitalism once and for all.

PLP has focused on the military, industrial work, and schools as our method of building the communist revolution that will transform our world. The bosses see the working class turning against Israel's genocide in Palestine and our refusal to join their military as World War III with their capitalist rivals looms. They need to build a much larger army than they have. This comes as they attempt to discipline the smaller capitalists represented by the gutter racist and sexist MAGAs. They also need an industrial base for war, to rebuild a failing infrastructure.

Teachers need to unite

In a NYC high school, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) union has been saying that there is no curriculum mandate while the administration has been making plans to implement it. Following a pattern of how they would close larger schools, they wanted to grant the teachers in the building the illusion of choice by saying that they could pick from a set of vendors each with a different curriculum. Much of the curriculum mandated by the administration contains books that drill anti-communist and anti-working class ideas. One book that is taught at many public schools is Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, a vehemently anti-communist book. Out of the entire library of Black Literature, why that book? This is a theme of these curriculums; they teach and control the narrative that the bosses need the workers to believe as reality.

Being the bosses they are, the DOE informed the teachers that they had subsidized only one of the curricula, basically making the decision for them. The teachers in the English Department want to resist this existential attack on their careers. PLP keeps pointing out that this attack is indicative of growing fascism as the bosses directly move to take control of the means of ideological production.

A video attached to an email that was sent to the English teachers by the corporation behind the chosen curriculum excitedly touted that teachers wouldn't even have to grade anymore as now AI would do the grading! How great for the bosses as students would use AI to answer AI generated questions on a worksheet that AI would ultimately grade. What role would the teacher as producer have in this scenario apart from being a facilitator of the bosses' designs? Communists know the answer is that the bosses would get exactly what they want and that students will suffer the most.

Racism and sexism will intensify as the most exploited working class neighborhoods will get the least help because the teachers they get will be using subject matter not designed for them but for what the bosses need them to be. As the bosses push for online learning so they can shove 60 or more students into a classroom, the cutting edge of racism will be disproportionately felt by Black and Latin students. As direct attacks on them were thwarted by the mass working class struggle that coalesced into the Black Lives Matter movement, the bosses will directly use their system to maintain the racist inequity necessary for them to maximize surplus value for the profit they need to maintain their superiority over their imperialist rivals and, eventually, fund their wars.

Reform vs. Revolution

At this moment, the administration is saying that they will allow English teachers to teach anything they want for a single six week marking period. This crumb of reform will easily be taken away as they entrench their curriculum. It will be only a matter of time before the bosses create the facilitators of their ideology that they require for capitalism to remain unthreatened.

The little bit of human connection through labor that teachers get and are now losing would be far greater once we are all building a communist world. It will be when students are the focus of teaching because the whole of society will see them as producers, and their learning will be utilized to build a world where their needs would be met. Despite not being on the verge of communist revolution, the teachers in the building do want to fight back and are organizing meetings to discuss how. PLP is focused on building these meetings, facilitating this fight back, and making sure that it won't be easy for the bosses to attack the working class.

'Conference for Palestine'

Nationalist ideas strangle fightback

Continued from page 1

for sharpening the class struggle on campus, where we've taken on racist administrators and exposed their anti-student policies.

We also met students by throwing ourselves (if unevenly) into the encampments in New York. Unlike the fake left leadership of the conference, these encampments gave us a real glimpse at the power of the multi-racial working class. Without a politician or boss in sight, students organized their mini-societies: food, housing, education, security, healthcare, sanitation - it was all organized collectively. We were there, contributing to these efforts, all the while struggling against identity politics and nationalism and for a disciplined and internationalist outlook. The encampments, mostly led by women workers and students, allowed us to meet some of the fiercest fighters against U.S. imperialism, Zionism and capitalism. They were willing to risk arrest, suspension and expulsion to fight for Gaza and the international working class.

Importantly, the encampments also forced the liberal bosses to strip away their masks and show their fascist essence as they welcomed the kkkops to attack and brutalize students and workers.

The efforts we made to be a part of the class struggle are entirely responsible for us being able to bring a group to the conference in Detroit. The lesson could not be clearer: only by committing ourselves to participating in the class struggle and to being involved wherever workers or students are in motion is the ONLY way we can build a party that is capable of launching a revolution for communism.

Despite the refusal of nationalist, revisionist leaders to send 3,000 conference attendees, PL'ers took the initiative and led a contingent to offer support. We learned from their experiences that we provided political leadership based on the knowledge we gained from CCNY, FIT, and decades of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) struggles. We also distributed CHALLENGES to dozens of students hungry for revolutionary change. We invite all students to join the revolutionary communist PLP.

Italy and China's BRI, a nest of capitalist contradictions

The continually shifting relationship of the Italian government to the U.S. and China testifies to the growing instability of global capitalism. As secondary powers from Africa to Latin America to the Middle East to Europe jockey for dominance amidst sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry, more wars are coming, including world war. And as the capitalists compete for profits, the working class will lose.

In 2016 Italy was the first G-7 country to plan to join the Chinese BRI (Belt and Road Initiative). This infrastructure proposal was meant to turn the Adriatic port of Trieste into a key point of entry of Chinese goods into Europe, as well as converting Genoa, Palermo, and Venice into enlarged trading hubs (see map). Bristling at being dominated by German and French capitalists, Italian capitalists were slipping away from the European Union (EU), seeking greater independent leverage.

Italy caught between competing imperialist powers

For the Chinese imperialists, breaking into the Italian market would gain them a political and financial beachhead in Europe. It would also foster divisions in the EU, expand Chinese capital into more developed markets and weaken the hold of U.S. imperialism over the NATO-affiliated nations.

The plan did not work out. Between 2019 and 2023, Italian exports to China increased only from 13B to 16.4B euros. Yet Chinese exports to Italy ballooned from 31.7B euros to 57.5B euros. Only the port of Trieste was developed. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia—China's close ally— has, at least temporarily, driven several of the EU nations toward rearmament and supporting Ukraine (Diplomat, September 21, 2023 and November 23, 2023).

The 2022 election of neo fascist Giorgia Meloni as Prime Minister drove the final nail into the coffin of the BRI in Italy. Meloni opportunistically proclaimed herself a committed friend of the U.S., European unity, and support for Ukraine.

China's Belt and Road Intiative (BRI) would turn the Adriatic port of Trieste into a key point of entry of Chinese goods into Europe, as well as converting Genoa, Palermo, and Venice into enlarged trading hubs.

But nothing remains stable as imperialist powers compete. Many nations in the EU rely heavily upon Russian gas for energy and—even without joining the BRI—engage in extensive trade with China, which is Germany's second-biggest trading partner. The Meloni government continues to encourage extensive links between Italian and Chinese firms. After publicly snubbing China in 2023, Meloni is currently undertaking a "charm offensive" as Chinese President Xi Jinping was reportedly planning a visit to Europe in May 2024 (Bloomberg, April 10).

Capitalist opportunism and competition know no borders. The BRI "silk road" now has competition from the "cotton road" of the newly created India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Italy may join (Diplomat, September 21, 2023). China and India are in tense competition. If Italy joins IMEC after abandoning the BRI, this decision would mirror the sharpening rivalries among imperialist and would-be imperialist powers. (Independent, January 12).

The working class must run the world—that's communism!

Whichever ruling classes win this dangerous imperialist competition, the working classes of the world will pay the price. In China, the Gini inequality index is one of the highest in the world. Workers are exploited, strikes abound, tens of millions of youth are unemployed, and migrant laborers within China are super-exploited (China Labour Bulletin, January 31). Workers must move beyond strikes to run all of society. That's communism.

In Italy, the public healthcare system is being brutally dismantled, with doctors entering the private sector or leaving the country. Education is cut, while teachers are paid poverty-level wages and young people cannot afford to get married and start families. Chinese laborers in factories touting "Made in Italy" earn 20 euros for a boutique "Italian" handbag selling for 350 euros. Meanwhile, desperate migrants from countries devastated by climate change and violent imperialist profiteering die by the thousands every year trying to reach Europe via the Mediterranean Sea—all as Meloni's racist regime nods in approval. Under communism there would be no borders, no migrants and no racist regimes whether in Italy or China.

Imperialists eventually resolve their contradictions through war. Regional and local wars are raging everywhere. World war is coming. Communists everywhere need to join with the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in organizing workers to fight their bosses. Turn imperialist war into class war for communism, where the working class runs the world.

Letter: Fighting for communism, rain or shine!

After 30 days of lip service from the Rutgers University-Newark administration and their refusal to remove ROTC from campus, as one of the encampment leaders demanded, Progressive Labor party members pushed the limits with a rally on Memorial Day at the nearest recruitment center–the National Guard Armory. Although this action was announced spontaneously, the night before Memorial Day, hundreds were bombed and burned by Israel at a safe house in Rafah. The urgency to have a demonstration, especially on one of capitalism's most hypocritical holidays to honor veterans they sacrificed to prop up their imperialist system, proved even more of an opportunity to emphasize why we need communism.

While we called for students and workers to join us at the armory, other Rutgers students called for people to rally in NYC at a bigger march led by nationalist misleaders who previously put students in the line of fire with police. Another element amidst these decisions was a forecast of thunderstorms approaching. Most PL'ers and friends were hesitant to continue with the rally because of the forecast but followed the lead of an adamant comrade who had heard other PL'ers confirm that we would go out rain or shine. Of course, we didn't want to risk anyone's life to go out and rally during a thunderstorm, but only light rain fell during the whole period of thunder. In planning this rally, we agreed to watch the weather and cancel if it didn't look right. Although we canceled officially and publicly to our friends at Rutgers, most of the PLP and a few friends still showed up. As a light sprinkle of rain fell, one comrade suggested that we lead a CHALLENGE sale at the nearby stores while we were there.

Three of us walked into a braiding shop and spoke to a Black woman worker blow drying a little girl's hair in preparation for her appointment. Our friend started by sharing that we're here to talk about issues stemming from the system. The woman coldly replied, "What issues are those?" Undeterred, we shared with her that we originally came out to make the connections between the student-worker encampments at Rutgers, pushing the institution to divest from the war in Israel to the neighborhood recruitment of students in Newark by protesting outside of the armory across the street. She mentioned that the youth just need more to do. Then she went on to share that although she doesn't completely agree with Biden, she thinks not voting for Biden would be like voting still, or in other words, still making a choice. I shared with her that we do have other ways to have our voices heard; like protesting at the Democratic National Convention in August and building for communism long term.

She went on to share that she used to be in cosmetology school under former liberal Mayor-now NJ Senator, Cory Booker, and once she got close to completing the program, the funding and program were cut with short notice. As we spoke more with her, she shared that she lives in an apartment building, "the Spires," formally known as Garden Spires, with a long tenant organizing history. From this conversation, we exchanged contact information and invited her to a study group, to which she responded that she likes to stay up on what's going on. As we were leaving, we even overheard her telling her aunt about speaking to people trying to do good in the community. From this experience on, we agreed that we would be ready to go out like we do on May Day, rain or shine. As we often boldly chant in Spanish, Ni con lluvia, ni con balas! Nor rain nor bullets will stop us. Power to the working class.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Student campers hungry for communist revolution

The Rutgers Newark encampment still goes strong after 35 days - making it one of the longest in the United states. The week of memorial day, myself and some comrades from the NJ chapter spent some time at RU observing, building, marshaling safety and offering delicious daily salads (got to make sure the comrades get their vitamins and minerals). Their very focused political effort is calling for the university to disclose, divest, and reinvest in the very community they occupy. Newark. Rutgers students, staff, and Newark residents and community members alike break bread, host teach-ins, make political art, and sleep side by side as they apply pressure for the university to divest from genocide. Witnessing and sharing in this political moment can not but help fill you up with hope on the fight against big bosses, imperialist wars and facism when you see the children play while community members hand out food while we gather at the people's tent to have a community touch base.

Lessons from this action are plentiful. A huge lesson after witnessing a few interpersonal transgressions is how imperative it is to keep the politics sharp. A few tensions arose & it's a reminder that when the politics are not consistently challenged, sharpened and/or struggled with- liberalism, liberal guilt, and cult of personality can exacerbate tensions within the community. In building this multiracial, class, struggle with both the housed and un-housed, collegiate educated and life educated, etc. there was a moment when the community became overwhelmed with liberal identity politics and guilt—anything distracting, disrupting the movement & politics must be dealt with no matter who is at the source. Propping up someone merely because of the identities they fall under is dangerous. Another lesson I observed first hand was the tensions between reform and revolution. Though the committee leadership is doing a wonderful job in negotiations and keeping the camp running—it feels as if there is a disconnect in what feels like to me a very clear opportunity to base and build long term with the very community they are advocating for in negotiations. Beyond sharing space and speaking lessons at —but finding that the real power and longevity of this fight is with the people and not in trying to pursue leadership roles on committees or trying to tail behind the reformist and revisionist organized marches in NYC and DC.

My last observation is more so thoughts on the human mind's amazing ability to adapt and normalize. The camp has been a fixture for some weeks now — almost normal at this point to the surrounding community. Dog walkers, students with books, partygoers now pass by the encampment as if it's business as usual. The blaring, deafening, unavoidable rally cries are now just another day in the neighborhood. I found this a missed opportunity for more daily militant engagement—whether it be a rallying outside RU leadership offices or passing out literature.

PLP has an opportunity here to step and build with the amazing workers that congregated around this encampment. Myself and other comrades have shared sharp dialogues with the students and workers and it is clear that there is a hunger and thirst for revolution and the people are willing to disrupt and sacrifice their time and even put their livelihoods on the line for the fight against facism.

Mohawk, badge of honor for the working class

On May 9, I attended a court hearing in which the defendant, Mohawk, a well-known Chicago artist, accepted a plea deal. He had been at a George Floyd protest in 2020, when the kkkops attacked the demonstrators. He was accused of assault on a kkkop with a skateboard. He was on house arrest for almost two years, and now was facing eight felony counts.

Before the hearing, the prosecutor asked each person in court why they were there. Most answered that they were there to support Mohawk. The judge acknowledged the packed courtroom with supporters for the defendant and said he received 183 letters from his supporters. The state agreed to drop six of the eight felony counts, in view of the mass support and solidarity Mohawk had.

The kkkop who said he was assaulted has eight complaints of excessive force against him. Apparently, he was in the process of beating demonstrators when Mohawk came to their defense. It's the kkkops who should be prosecuted, but we all know under this system they are protected by the injustice system that victimizes workers of all colors, especially the most militant & courageous, like Mohawk. You wear a badge of honor for the working class!

Workers need dialectical materialism

This May Day reminded me that PLP (Progressive Labor Party) members are communist dialectical materialists, rather than Marxists, and that we need to use Dialectical Materialism, the science of change, to win workers and students to fight for communism. There are three laws of dialectical materialism, with categories embodying the concepts that express the essential connections and relationships in the world.

On Saturday, May 4, in Brooklyn, I marched on the 50th anniversary of my first PLP May Day march. As always, the march was inspiring, the chants loud and clear and on point, the discipline tight. I was heartened to see and talk to old comrades, one of whom I had first marched with in Washington in 1974.

What impressed me most, however, was the final speech of the day, given by a young, Black PL'er, who used dialectical materialism to illuminate her path into the Progressive Labor Party. She spoke first of her family's involvement in the struggle for Eritrean independence, which was finally achieved in 1993. This was a particular successful instance of a general struggle of former colonies in the twentieth century to achieve independence.

The speaker then took us to the United States and her first encounter with the PLP through purchasing her first CHALLENGE. This proved to be an external stimulus that began to move her internally to the left. Wanting to learn more, the speaker sought out PLP comrades who struggled with her to recognize the appearance of success in Eritrea as opposed to the essence of failure for the masses there, now suffering under an extremely repressive regime.

As the quantity of her interactions with the Party increased, the internal struggle between the speaker's nationalist upbringing and the Party's line of communist internationalism intensified until a qualitative change occurred. The speaker moved from being a potential recruit to an actual Party member, and eventually a leader.

The speech was about the particular experience of one person, but it was also an example of how in general workers and students are recruited to the Party. The speaker delivered the speech passionately and moved those who heard it, including myself. Just as importantly, the speaker stressed the particular lesson that she had learned, and that the Party is emphasizing generally to workers, students and our own members—nationalism may have at times a progressive appearance, but its essence is always poison to the working class.

Communist Culture Corner

A New Direction

The following is an excerpt poem written and performed by two PL'ers in LA at our May Day celebration several sentences have been edited for political emphasis. The entirety of the poem will be published aat www.plp.org.

A-cross the 4 cardinal signs
And spanning space and time
We connect
From the North to the South Pacific
Our reality couldn't be more horrific
As the banker's solution to the heating planet
Is going from gas to electric
Creating a whole new craze for deep sea mining
Seeking maximum profits in the drilling
For lithium, copper, cobalt, and zinc
Sacrificing our ecology for their economy
In a race to the bottom-
Causing irreversible global warming
And inevitable global warring.
To the Midwest
Like the chemical spill that made a town ill
From a derailed train in East Palestine, Ohio
To Dexter Reed whose life was stolen
With 100 shots fired by 5 racist cops in Chicago
To the Middle East,
The Gaza strip, the shape of Dexter's body
If we traced him as he lay prostrate and lifeless
Riddled with torn flesh and blood spilt
Like a trainwreck across the pavement
With 3 decades of police killings
Condensed into a few months
By US-made Israeli bullets, tanks and bombardments
Over 35 thousand Palestinian workers
2/3 of them women and children murdered
It's no longer ethereal but becoming clear
Capitalism's need to control labor,
Trade routes and petroleum
Is laid bear
And folks are beginning to see
That even Democrats can be Nazi's
And that what we need
Is a new direction
Beyond the 2 parties
Voting "uncommitted"
in the bosses' elections
Witnessing Arab, Jewish, Black,
and White workers of the world unite
Healthcare and Labor
AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power - Act Up
Standing up with college students in standoffs
From east to west do you see?

Visit plp.org to read the rest.

General By Bertolt Brecht

GENERAL, YOUR TANK IS A POWERFUL VEHICLE
It smashes down forests and
crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect: It needs a driver.
General, your bomber is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect:
It needs a mechanic.
General, a human is very useful.
They can fly and they can kill.
But they have one defect:
They can think.

60 YEARS OF CHALLENGE

YOUR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PAPER

Continued from page 8

Ballan Printing, a company that printed many small community and campus papers—and a huge number of pornographic ones that had sprung up since the 1960s. (The Mafia, in collusion with the owners, had coerced the workers into a local union it controlled.) But neither the owners nor the Mafia counted on the workers' rebelliousness. The workers read our paper and saw the various exposés we wrote about the lousy working conditions that profit-hungry bosses were pushing on workers throughout the country.

CHALLENGE'ing and exposing rulers lies from the very start

When we went to pick up the paper, the workers showed us the horrible condition of what passed for their bathroom and asked us to write about it. Our editor Luis Castro wrote an exposé for the next issue, which the workers read with enthusiastic approval. When the bosses saw the article, they went wild. They told us it was all lies and one-sided and challenged us to print their side, "the truth." We told them that there was only one "truth," the "workers' truth," which made them even crazier. From then on, they scrutinized every issue. Soon afterwards, the owners renovated the bathroom into a halfway decent condition. The workers attributed that improvement to the article we had written. When a pre-May Day issue came out, we printed the words of the workers' anthem, "The Internationale." When we went to pick up that issue, a pressman suddenly leapt up the two flights of stairs to the top of the huge web press and in a clear, loud voice began singing "The Internationale." As the strains of the final words, "the International working class shall be the human race," drifted across the pressroom, the workers spontaneously burst into applause. We never found out how this worker knew the song's melody, but news of the performance soon traveled to the far reaches of Brooklyn. We are now in our 55th year of publishing CHALLENGE, and have never missed an issue.

Black workers march in Harlem (1964), holding wanted poster of killer kkkop Gilligan.

Donate! Donate! Donate!

'You can't smash the bosses without passing the hat'

As the bosses' rivalries are leading to rising fascism and open war around the world, workers are confronting racist and sexist exploitation, capitalist violence, and imperialism. Capitalism has forced record numbers of migrants to flee their homes to avoid violence or economic crises. Meanwhile, the bosses are trying to prepare workers to fight and die for them in the next world war. The international working class is refusing to take these vicious attacks lying down, but continues to need strong communist leadership to end this profit system once and for all. The Progressive Labor Party continues to provide this leadership around the world.

As communists, we know we must build a world without wages or any system of money. Until then, we live under the limitations of this capitalist system. We ask workers to sustain the Party's work through donations.

Contributions can be made the following ways:

Cash it: Donate through your local PL'er!

Check: Write the check out to "Challenge Periodicals" and mail to PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202.

PayPal: Go to to plp.org and click "donate"

Join us in the fight to smash capitalism and build a communist world!

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

IDF continues destruction of Palestinian homes

France24, 6/1–Mohammed Al-Najjar, a 33-year-old Gazan, said Saturday he was "shocked" and feeling "lost" as he returned home, only to find much of Jabalia refugee camp in ruins after an Israeli offensive. "All the houses have been reduced to rubble," Najjar told AFP in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip. "You are lost, you do not know where exactly your house is in the middle of this massive destruction."

Israeli forces carried out a massive bombardment campaign in Jabalia in recent weeks, part of a fierce ground offensive in northern Gaza -- an area the military had previously said was out of the control of Hamas militants. "I was shocked by the extent of the destruction in the latest aggression on Jabalia camp," said Najjar. At least 36,379 Palestinians have been killed and 82,407 wounded in Israel's war in Gaza, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry.

Battle for Myanmar picks up steam

Foreign Affairs, 5/31–The conflict in Myanmar, now in its fourth year, has claimed thousands of civilian lives and displaced more than three million people. Since toppling the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, the military junta under General Min Aung Hlaing has failed to consolidate its authority. Over the last seven months, the military has suffered a succession of humiliating defeats at the hands of opposition forces.

Myanmar is undergoing fragmentation: large parts of the country, including most of Myanmar's international borders, are now under the dominion of various ethnic armed groups. These groups are expanding control of their ethnic homelands and building autonomous statelets…Many of these groups joined forces with ethnic armies that have been fighting the Myanmar state for decades. Violence has now engulfed much of the country, pitting regime forces against hundreds of resistance groups, from small units to organized militias equipped with modern light arms.

European clean energy demands blood minerals

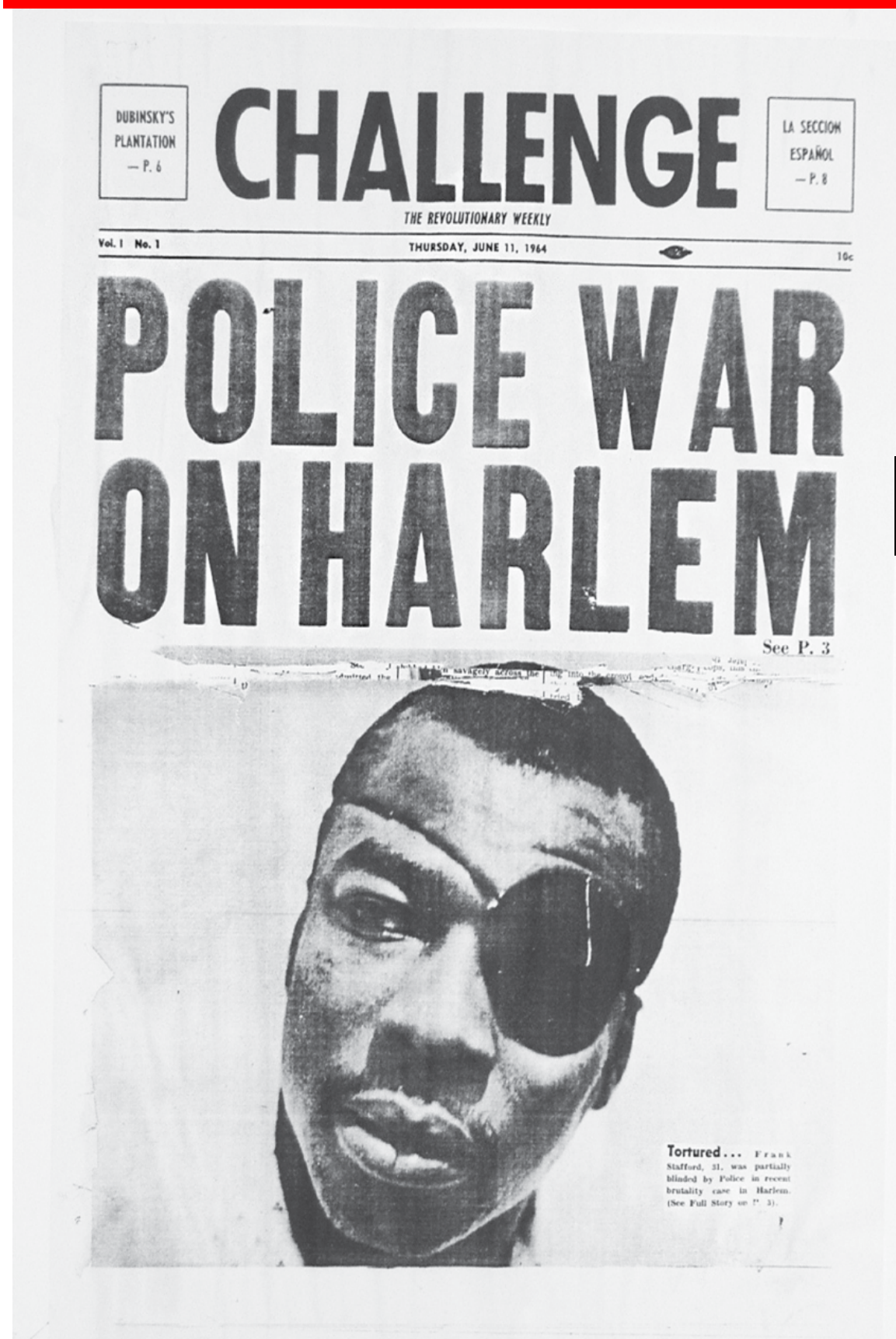
Al Jazeera, 5/2–As the green revolution revs up, the European Union has signed a deal with Rwanda that will ensure a supply of precious minerals needed to build cleantech like solar panels and electric vehicles. What's not to like? As the European Commission described it, after inking a Memorandum of Understanding back in February, the deal will "nurture sustainable and resilient value chains for critical raw materials." But all is not as it seems. It turns out that Rwanda is a country that exports more than it mines. Vast amounts of minerals like coltan and gold are smuggled from the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda, where they enter global supply chains.

The racket has been extensively documented by United Nations experts reporting on the DRC war – a spillover from the Rwandan genocide, which has dragged on nearly three decades, the outside world largely ignorant of the widespread use of rape to subjugate enemies and the massacres that have killed a staggering six million people. The DRC says M23 rebels, who claim they are protecting local Tutsis from Hutu genocidaires in the resource-rich east, play an instrumental role in moving the goods over Lake Kivu.

War in Ukraine escalating

Sky News, 6/1–On Thursday, President Joe Biden partially lifted restrictions on how Ukraine can use military supplies sent by the US. "Russia regards all long-range weapons used by Ukraine as already being directly controlled by servicemen from NATO countries. This is no military assistance, this is participation in a war against us," Medvedev said." And such actions could well become a casus belli [an act that provokes a war]." He said it would be a "fatal mistake" on the part of the West to think that Russia was not ready to use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine - and spoke of the potential to strike unnamed hostile countries with strategic nuclear weapons…A Putin-backed think tank also suggested on Thursday that Russia should consider a "demonstrative" nuclear blast to scare Ukraine from using Western weapons inside its territory.

60 YEARS OF CHALLENGE, YOUR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PAPER



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CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY WEEKLY

LA SECCION ESPAÑOL — P. 8

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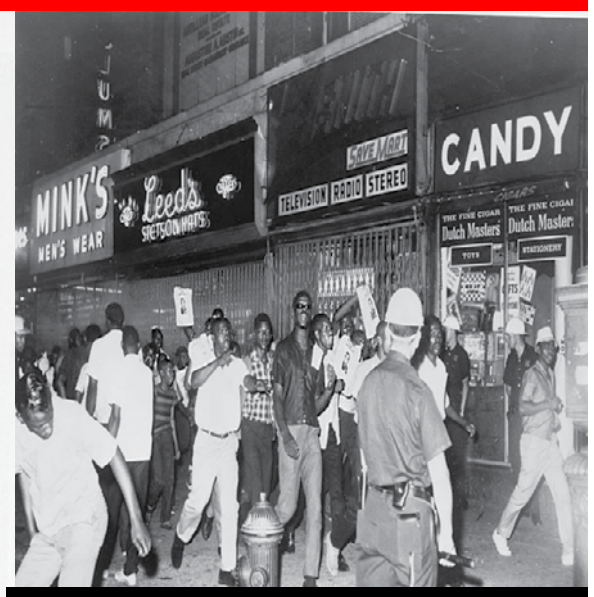
POLICE WAR ON HARLEM

See P. 3

Tortured... Frank Stafford, 31, was partially blinded by Police in recent brutality case in Harlem. (See Full Story on P. 3).



Black workers rebelling in the streets of Harlem in 1964 a few weeks after CHALLENGE WAS BORN.

The following story has been reprinted from Wally Linder's book *Life of Labor and Love.*

In June 1964, the Progressive Labor Movement decided to print an eight-page weekly newspaper; CHALLENGE was born. Our search for a printer led us to an outfit in Trenton, N.J. After laying down a deposit, the printer looked at the first issue and told us that would be the last one he'd print. We called up the Harris offset press manufacturer and asked for a list of newspaper printers to whom it had sold web offset presses. That's how we found the Sun Publishing Co., located in the Chinese community on Manhattan's Lower East Side. We showed our first issue to the owner, Mr. Chan, and he agreed to print our newspaper. His wife and kids helped with various tasks. Milt Rosen, PLM chairperson, and I packed the papers into boxes for pick-up.

CHALLENGE'ing and rebelling against the rulers from day 1

As it happened, later that month the Harlem rebellion erupted, during which the rebels were holding the front page of CHALLENGE as their flag while marching. This prompted the NYPD Red Squad to visit Mr. Chan and warn him that if he continued to print our paper he would be in for trouble. Chan told them he was within his rights to print any newspaper brought to him. "What about freedom of the press?" he shot back at the cops' threat. He was not about to abandon his only account. Years later, when Mr. Chan retired, our search for another printer led us to Brooklyn and

Continued on page 7

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, June 14

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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